



VA Learning Opportunities Residency (VALOR) Pharmacy Program

BACKGROUND:

The Pharmacy VALOR program will provide opportunities for outstanding students to develop competencies in pharmacy practice while working at an approved VA healthcare facility. Opportunities for learning include didactic or classroom experiences, competency-based clinical practice with a qualified pharmacist preceptor, and participation in pharmacy practice conferences. Students recruited for the program must have completed the third professional year (or equivalent in year round programs) of education at an Accreditation Council of Pharmaceutical Education (ACPE) accredited School or College of Pharmacy. Students may be appointed on a full or part-time basis during the summer months and may continue during their final academic year on a part-time basis.

Appointment as a VALOR student will be from 3 to 12 months, with a usual minimum requirement of 400 hours. If affiliating schools curriculum does not allow a summer appointment of 10 weeks at 40 hours per week the facility may elect to request less than 400 hours. The aggregate hours that a student may be funded while in the program is 800 hours.

THE PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS: The Pharmacy VALOR program at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System is designed to give residents hands-on experience in a variety of the pharmacy services provided, as well as a guided introduction to many of the people that provide our innovative services.

Didactic educational plan will include:

- Orientation (32 hours): Includes a 2-day Medical Center orientation and a 2-day Pharmacy Service orientation. The student is trained one on one with another pharmacist or other pharmacy staff to gain the knowledge needed to provide excellent care to our veterans.
- Educational Modules and Competency assessment (8 hours): The Pharmacy Service has developed a series of Educational Modules designed to educate new and current employees on necessary competencies within the service. The student will participate in a variety of these modules and then meet with the program administrator to review them.
- Weekly, introductory interviews and presentation (40 hours): In order to expose the student to the wide variety of pharmacists involved in the service, the student will be asked to conduct ten interviews of various personnel within the Pharmacy Service. The student will be able to select from a list of staff, clinical and administrative personnel for their interviews. The student will then research the position they are to interview, arrange a convenient time to interview the employee, and conduct the interview. The student will then present their findings to the program administrator and/or a group of pharmacy employees/trainees.

The clinical educational plan will involve the student working with the pharmacists in the areas below to learn the medication management process within each section.

Inpatient Pharmacy Section (120 hours)

- Reviewing of the doctor's medication order and patient's drug regimens along with the pharmacist to assure that the medications ordered are prescribed rationally, in correct dosages, and free of potential drug interactions or incompatibilities which could alter the desired or expected therapeutic response;
- Consulting with the prescriber to correct or resolve potential medication problems;
- Providing information to physicians, nurses, dietitians and other allied health care professionals on drugs, their characteristics, contraindications, dosages, adverse reactions, and availability;
- Exchange of unit-dose carts as scheduled and filling of unit-dose carts as scheduled
- Filling the order with the medication and delivery of the medication

- Working with pharmacy automation

Intravenous Admixture (80 hours)

- Prepares IV admixtures (piggybacks, large volume parenterals, total/peripheral nutrition and chemotherapy) utilizing aseptic techniques in a timely manner for final check by a pharmacist
- Delivers IV admixtures as scheduled.

Outpatient Pharmacy (120 hours)

- Review the patient's outpatient medication profile to assure that the medications prescribed is not incompatible with, or interact with, other drugs that the patient may be receiving.
- Consult with patients, answering questions regarding their drug regimen, which includes advising patients of potential drug-related or health-related conditions which may develop from the use of the medication for which the patient should seek additional medical care;
- Preparation of prescriptions for final check by a pharmacist;
- Reviewing prescriptions prior to dispensing to assure that dosage forms and doses prescribed are correct;
- Reviewing and evaluating changes in therapy, questionable therapy and potential medication problems are discussed with physicians and alternatives are recommended;
- Obtaining information from patient regarding the use of any non-VA provided medications or herbal products;
- Observing regulations governing prescribing, labeling, dispensing, and security procedures for medications, supplies, narcotics and other controlled substances;
- Conducting discharge counseling of patients, answering questions regarding their drug regimen, which includes advising patients of potential drug-related or health-related conditions which may develop from the use of the medication for which the patient should seek additional medical care.

Ambulatory Care (40 hours)

- Observe a new patient orientation in Anticoagulation Clinic
- Participate in management of clinic activities
- Answer drug information questions
- Counsel a patient on new drug therapy

BENEFITS:

Salary equal to 80 percent of the local VA facility's per annum general schedule salary rate for GS-9, Step 1 (approximately \$33,250 per annum salary rate).

No service obligation.

Experience both distributive and clinical VA Pharmacy Services.

Gain insight to the nation's premier healthcare delivery service.

Former VALOR students, who receive their Pharm.D. Degree may be hired at a salary rate above the minimum, based on superior qualifications such as documented outstanding performance in the VALOR program and/or number of hours completed as a VALOR participant (e.g., unlicensed Baccalaureate or Pharm.D. graduates at the GS-9 Grade, licensed Baccalaureate or Pharm.D. graduates at the GS-11 Grade).

APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS:

1. A minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale;

***Note:** The GPA must be computed on their professional training in the School or College of Pharmacy, or for work accepted for credit towards the pharmacy degree. While a student may have a grade below "B" in a pharmacy course, the cumulative GPA for the core pharmacy courses may not be less than a 3.0. Only data on official transcripts will be used to determine grade qualifications. For students enrolled in a school*

or college of pharmacy that utilizes a pass/fail grading system there must be a recommendation from the Dean or Director of the academic program regarding the student's academic achievement to substantiate selection for the VALOR program.

2. Be able to complete a minimum of 400 hours as a Pharmacy VALOR student in a VA facility (with the noted exception in 3.d.); and
3. Be a United States citizen and meet physical examination standards at the time of entry in the Pharmacy VALOR program.

NOTE: *Students with a service obligation to any Federal, State, or private institution, or recipients of any Federal scholarships are ineligible for the Pharmacy VALOR Program.*

HOW TO APPLY: Your application packet should include:

1. Complete US Government form OF-612 "Optional Application for Federal Appointment" **AND** form OF-306 "Declaration for Federal Employment". These forms are available at <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.htm>.
2. Official School/College of Pharmacy transcript.
3. Submit letter from Dean to the Chief of Pharmacy, letter should include the following:
 - a. A nomination of the student to the program;
 - b. Verification of enrollment as a full-time student (as defined by the school);
 - c. Successful completion of the second year of pharmacy education by the time the student enters into the program;
 - d. Anticipated graduation within two years after entry into the Pharmacy VALOR Program
4. Statement of career goals.

Application Deadline: All application materials must be postmarked on or before 3/26/10. Interviews will be arranged in early April.

Send all materials to:

Randell K. Miyahara, Pharm.D.
Clinical Coordinator, Pharmacy Service
3801 Miranda Avenue (119)
Palo Alto, CA 94304
(650) 493-5000, ext. 67303
FAX: (650) 852-3444
randell.miyahara@va.gov